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Hospital Corpsman #ThankfulFor Small Acts of Kindness

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Editor's note:

On November 26, Good Morning America featured Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class (HM2) Shannon Thompson as part of its “Thankful Happens Here” series celebrating military heroes, their families and community members who made a lasting impact. Here is HM2 Thompson’s story.

I was raised to be nice to everyone. As my parents always said, “kill ‘em with kindness.” I was taught to hold doors for strangers no matter what, even if they were half way across the parking lot. “Yes ma’am, yes sir, no ma’am, and no sir” were all regular parts of my vocabulary. I grew up understanding the value of showing others kindness, it’s something that I believe helps me be a better corpsman, and a better person.

Even the smallest acts of kindness can make a large difference in someone’s life.

In 2010 during a deployment to Afghanistan, one such act of kindness made a lasting impression on my family.

My family moved from Camp Pendleton, California, to our hometown of Salem, Virginia, to be closer to friends and family for the duration of my deployment.



“Salem Post Office” by Molly Cardenas – Own work. Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Salem is a small, beautiful town, nestled in the Appalachian Mountains of southwest Virginia. There is only one post office in town. It’s small, has one line and only a few registers. The first time my wife went there, she had no idea how much one person would change her life.

She was there to send me a care package. . She explained to the clerk that I was deployed with the Marines and she wasn’t sure how to send me a care package.

The kindness that postal clerk demonstrated meant the world to my wife. He took the time to explain what she needed to do, painstakingly going over each of the forms and labels, showing her how to do everything step by step. My wife was extremely grateful for his patience.

As my deployment continued, she made frequent trips to the post office, at least twice a week, with multiple packages from friends and family. Every time she stopped in, the postal clerk would ask, “How is he doing?” or “have you heard from Shannon?” The honest concern he showed for me and my family gave us a sense of comfort and community. This small act of kindness helped us through a difficult time for our family. My wife looked forward to visiting the post office every week.

During my seven month deployment there was never a question about “if” I was coming home. It simply was not an option. Those care packages were a constant reminder of home. It meant the world to me that a postal clerk was there to help. It helped me focus on the mission.



The Thompson family reunited with Ron Johnson, the postal clerk who made a difference in their lives.

As a United States Navy hospital corpsman assigned to a Marine Corps battalion, my job was to treat Marines. From sick call to immunizations, I was there to make sure my fellow Marines were mission ready. During my deployment, I was involved in a massive, casualty-producing event caused by an improvised explosive device (IED). I triaged and treated casualties while directing Marines to assist with treatment. I was able to do my job in Afghanistan because I knew I didn't have to worry about my family at home.

Four years have passed since that deployment and unfortunately, I do not know what happened to the kind postal clerk. I wish we could remember his name. Kindness is powerful, it has the ability to make or break someone's day. The kindness that postal clerk demonstrated touched me and my family.

He made such a lasting impact on our lives and we never had the opportunity to say thank you.

In conjunction with Disney's "Unforgettable Happens Here," Good Morning America arranged a surprise reunion at Walt Disney World Resort between the Thompson family and Ron Johnson, the postal clerk who made a difference in their lives. [Click here to see their reunion on Good Morning America.](#)

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